



## **CHAMPVA FACT SHEET 01-1**

### **Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Benefits**

#### **What is CHAMPVA?**

CHAMPVA (the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs) is a federal health benefits program administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. CHAMPVA is a Fee for Service (indemnity plan) program. CHAMPVA provides reimbursement for most medical expenses – inpatient, outpatient, mental health, prescription medication, skilled nursing care, and durable medical equipment (DME). There is a very limited adjunct dental benefit that requires pre-authorization.

#### **What outpatient services are available under CHAMPVA for mental health evaluation and psychotherapy benefits?**

- Limited to two psychotherapy sessions per week in any combination of individual, family, collateral or group.
- Visits that are more frequent require review by the CHAMPVA Mental Health Contractor.
- Limited to 23 outpatient psychotherapy sessions per fiscal year (October 1 – September 30.)
- Outpatient mental health sessions beyond the benefit limit require preauthorization by the CHAMPVA Mental Health Contractor.
- Individual psychotherapy over 60 minutes is only covered for crisis intervention and requires authorization by the CHAMPVA Mental Health Contractor.
- Multiple sessions on the same day are only covered for crisis intervention and require authorization by the CHAMPVA Mental Health Contractor.
- Multi-family group therapy is not a covered benefit under CHAMPVA.

#### **What outpatient services are available under CHAMPVA for substance use disorder benefits?**

- Limited to 60 group therapy sessions for rehabilitation, when medically necessary, per benefit period. Individual therapy is not covered for Substance Use Disorder Rehabilitation.

- Limited to 15 family therapy sessions for rehabilitation, when medically necessary, per benefit period.
- Substance Use Disorder sessions beyond the benefit limit require preauthorization by the CHAMPVA Mental Health Contractor.

*Note: A benefit period for Substance Use Disorder Rehabilitation begins on the first day of treatment and ends 365 days later.*

### **What other outpatient therapy services are available under CHAMPVA?**

- Attention Deficient Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): CHAMPVA will reimburse for services that are medically or psychologically necessary to diagnose or treat ADHD.
  - Services related to general or special education are not a covered benefit.
  - Tests of Variables of Attention (TOVA) are not a covered benefit.
- Court-Ordered Treatment: Ordered care where the patient is directed to a specific treatment provider, primarily because of the potential for CHAMPVA coverage are not covered, such as a public treatment program available at no cost to the beneficiary.
- Crisis Intervention: Individual therapy over 60 minutes or family therapy over 90 minutes is only covered for crisis intervention. Authorization is required by the CHAMPVA Mental Health Contractor.
- Eating Disorders: Inpatient treatment for eating disorders requires authorization. Outpatient treatment is allowed under the same guidelines for outpatient psychotherapy.
- Electric Convulsive Therapy (ECT): ECT is a covered benefit on an outpatient basis when medically necessary. Psychotherapy on the same day as ECT is not a covered benefit.
- Psychotropic Pharmacologic Management: Medication management is a covered benefit unless provided on the same day as psychotherapy by the same provider.
- Psychological Testing: Limited to 6 hours a fiscal year. The CHAMPVA Mental Health Contractor must authorize any testing over six hours.
- Psychoanalysis: Requires authorization by the CHAMPVA Mental Health Contractor and must be provided by a graduate or candidate of a psychoanalytic training institute recognized by the American Psychoanalytic Association.

- Specific Learning Disorders: Services for learning disorders such as reading disorders or dyslexia, mathematics disorders, disorders of written expression and/or learning disorders not otherwise specified are not a CHAMPVA covered benefit.

### **What inpatient services are available under CHAMPVA for mental health disorder benefits?**

- Preauthorization is required for acute inpatient care by the CHAMPVA Mental Health Contractor.
- Limited to 30 days per fiscal year for acute inpatient care for beneficiaries' ages 19 and over.
- Limited to 45 days per fiscal year for acute inpatient care for beneficiaries' ages 18 and younger.
- A waiver of the 30/45-day limit may be obtained, when criteria are met that require an extension, by the CHAMPVA Mental Health Contractor.
- Inpatient psychotherapy is limited to five sessions per week. More than five sessions per week requires authorization by the CHAMPVA Mental Health Contractor.
- Outpatient psychotherapy that is provided while a beneficiary is participating in an inpatient program is not a covered service.

### **What inpatient services are available under CHAMPVA for substance use disorder benefits?**

#### Detoxification:

- Limited to 7 days per admission and counts toward the 30/45-inpatient mental health day limit.
- Detoxification can only be approved if care is under general medical supervision.

#### Rehabilitation:

- Limited to no more than one inpatient stay during a single benefit period or 21 days.
- Limited to three benefit periods or rehabilitation stays per lifetime.
- Must be certified for medical/psychological necessity before admission by the CHAMPVA Mental Health Contractor.

- Detoxification and rehabilitation days count toward the 30/45-day mental health inpatient limit.

#### **What services are available under CHAMPVA for partial hospitalization mental health benefits?**

- Limited to 60 days per fiscal year.
- Prior authorization is required by the CHAMPVA Mental Health Contractor.
- Outpatient psychotherapy while a beneficiary is participating in a partial hospitalization program is not covered.

#### **What services are available under CHAMPVA for partial hospitalization substance use disorder benefits?**

- Limited to 21 treatment days.
- Prior authorization is required by the CHAMPVA Mental Health Contractor.
- Partial Hospitalization care must be provided in a TRICARE approved or Medicare certified facility.

#### **What services are available under CHAMPVA Residential Treatment Center (RTC) Benefits?**

- Limited to 150 days per fiscal year.
- Must be provided in a TRICARE authorized facility.
- Is only covered for adolescents ages 18 and younger (or under the age of 21 if a full-time student in an accredited university or school when medically/psychologically necessary.)
- Must be pre-authorized by the CHAMPVA Mental Health Contractor at least two days before admission.
- Admissions primarily for substance use disorder rehabilitation are not covered.
- The treatment plan must include a provision for family therapy.
- A psychiatrist or other MD/DO must recommend admission and direct the treatment plan.

### **Who are CHAMPVA authorized mental health providers?**

- Any independent mental health provider who is appropriately licensed and/or certified and will accept the CHAMPVA allowable amount for CHAMPVA authorized benefits as payment in full. Providers who may render care independent of a physician's referral and supervision:
  - Psychiatrists, MDs and DOs
  - Clinical Psychologists
  - Certified Psychiatric Nurse Specialists
  - Licensed/Certified Clinical Social Workers (Master's Level)
  - Certified Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs)
  - Licensed Professional Counselors
  - Providers requiring a physician's referral and supervision include Pastoral Counselors and Mental Health Counselors

### **What benefits are not covered under the CHAMPVA mental health benefit?**

- Acupuncture/accupressure
- Aversion therapy
- Bioenergetic therapy
- Biofeedback for ordinary muscle tension or psychological factors
- Carbon dioxide therapy
- Care or supplies furnished or prescribed by a person in the immediate family
- Care for antisocial behavior
- Care for specific developmental disorders, learning disabilities and other conditions not attributable to a mental health disorder
- Counseling/self-help services, i.e., nutritional counseling, stress management, lifestyle modifications, counseling services related to tobacco use, safe sexual practices
- Domiciliary care/services including halfway houses and rest cure facilities
- EST as negative reinforcement
- Guided imagery
- Hypnosis
- Marathon therapy
- Marriage counseling
- Megavitamin therapy
- Multi-family group therapy
- Narcotherapy with LSD
- Orthomolecular therapy
- Psychotherapy within 24 hours of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) or electro-shock therapy (EST)
- Rolfing
- Sexual dysfunction, paraphilias and gender identity disorders

- Mind expansion or elective psychotherapy, i.e. Z therapy and transcendental meditation, environmental ecological treatments, primal therapy
- Services rendered by a provider who is not licensed for the service being provided
- Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Test of Variables of Attention (TOVA)
- Light Therapy for Seasonal Depression (SAD)
- Telephone Consults
- Weight control/reduction

### How do I get more information?

- Check our web site at [www.va.gov/hac](http://www.va.gov/hac)
  - Write us at P.O. Box 65023, Denver, CO 80206-9023
  - E-mail us at [hac.inq@med.va.gov](mailto:hac.inq@med.va.gov)
  - Call 1-800-733-8387, Monday-Friday from 9:00 AM -1:30 PM and 2:30- 5:00 PM Eastern Time.
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- For authorization of mental health benefits, providers in the United States may call the CHAMPVA Mental Health Contractor, Magellan Behavioral Health at 1-800-424-4018. International providers may call 1-720-529-7400. Magellan is also available by fax at 1-800-424-4017. You can write to Magellan Behavioral Health-CHAMPVA, P.O. Box 3567, Englewood, CO 80155.